

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 NAIROBI 003658

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF
STATE PASS AID
LONDON, PARIS FOR AFRICA WATCHER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/06/2025

TAGS: PGOV PREL KPAO SO KE

SUBJECT: SOMALIA -- INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY PREPARES TO
MEET "GOVERNMENT" IN JOWHAR

REF: A. NAIROBI 3434

1B. NAIROBI 3117

Classified By: MICHAEL J. FITZPATRICK, POLITICAL COUNSELOR, REASONS 1.4
(B) AND (D)

SUMMARY

11. (C) Somali Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi has formally requested that the international community travel to Jowhar, Somalia -- temporary seat of the Somali President's wing of the Transitional Federal Government -- to convene a meeting of the Somali Coordination and Monitoring Committee. In the absence of significant and substantive progress in addressing the political divisions now blocking the functioning of the TFG, the international community's acceptance to participate in such a meeting may irrevocably tilt the balance of legitimacy in favor of President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, and away from the Mogadishu-based minister-warlords. Such a move could prove to be the catalyst for open armed conflict among the various factions of the TFIs -- and provide an opportunity for Jihadists to capitalize on the chaos. END
SUMMARY.

PRIME MINISTER REQUESTS A CMC IN SOMALIA

12. (C) Members of the international community (IC) met on September 2 for a weekly exchange of information with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), Ambassador Francois Fall. Amb. Fall informed the group of a letter from Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Ali Mohamed Gedi (apparently received during the PM's visit to Nairobi during the week of August 22), formally requesting a convening of the Somalia Coordination and Monitoring Committee (CMC). In the letter (reproduced in its entirety, para 13), the PM proposed to convene the meeting in Jowhar, Somalia -- the town currently used as a temporary capital city by a TFG faction led by President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed -- during the last week in September. The SRSG asked IC members to consider the request, and proposed that those particularly interested in the subject should meet in a smaller informal group the week of September 5 to discuss principles and, if deemed appropriate, preparations.

WHERE IS THE TFG?

13. (C) Somalia Watcher joined on September 6 representatives of the Delegation of the European Commission, France, IGAD, Italy, Sweden, and the UK to discuss the PM's request and proposal. Somalia Watcher posited that the request for a CMC meeting raised several difficult issues. First, while the TFG's Prime Minister was the designated co-chair of the CMC (along with the SRSG), the IC had operated on a presumption that the PM would represent the Transitional Federal Government on the consultative body. Unfortunately, the TFG remained deeply divided, with the PM unable to hold a Council of Ministers meeting with more than a handful of ministers. Therefore, it could be seen as odd for the SRSG and the IC to meet with a co-chair unable to represent the institutions which created him.

14. (C) Second, Somalia Watcher pointed out that the United Nations Security Council had made it clear that the international community expected to see concerted efforts on the part of the members of the TFIs to enter into a dialogue, through the good offices of the SRSG, to resolve the differences that divided the institutions. As there had not yet been any dialogue among the TFI members on either side of the divide, one could hardly state that any progress had been made on this front.

15. (C) Last, Somalia Watcher opined that at this time, the IC could not in fact find a grouping of TFI members anywhere in Somalia that could be accurately viewed as representing the TFG, and should therefore be very careful as to on whom the IC conferred the title of "Somali government" -- the title having not yet been given to that group which had coalesced

around the PM and President in Jowhar. However, should the SRSG make significant progress in the coming days in conducting the dialogue called for in the Security Council's Presidential Statement, and TFI members from across the political spectrum back the convening of the CMC, then there would be grounds for a meeting to be held wherever the Somali consensus indicated would be acceptable

THERE IS BUT ONE TFG,
AND IT IS IN JOWHAR

16. (C) The Counselor to the "Italian Diplomatic Special Delegation for Somalia", Stefano A. Dejak, responded to these cautions with a straightforward claim of fact: That the IC had, by virtue of several meetings held in Jowhar of the Joint Planning Committee (a subsidiary body of the CMC), already made clear that it considered those in the "temporary capital" to hold the authority of the TFG. Since, according to Dejak, there was no question as to who embodied the TFG, and where they were located, it remained only to set a date for the CMC meeting, and determine the agenda.

17. (C) Representatives of the European Commission, Sweden, and the UK were more nuanced, but nonetheless favored proceeding with the planning of the CMC meeting. The EC representative stressed that the subject of reconciliation should in fact figure prominently on the CMC meeting agenda, and that care should be taken to ensure that there would be a TFG delegation representative of the various positions within the institutions to allow for this discussion. The Swedish representative cautioned that, while the IC's right to insist on a voice in the composition of the TFG delegation might be questioned, there should nonetheless be some consideration given to the subject.

18. (C) The UK representative, speaking for the European Union Presidency, stated that the EU could hardly not welcome the PM's request, having called for the convening of a CMC meeting for several months. That said, from the UK's perspective, the question remained as to whether there is, or is not, a government in Jowhar. He thought that the very process of preparing for a CMC meeting might sort out this question, if the IC were to take the line that the meeting must be held with as broadly representative a group as possible.

COMMENTS

19. (C) We see the momentum in the IC has taken the group past the essential question of who constitutes the TFG, having settled on the small group of ministers and MPs surrounding the President and PM in Jowhar. Despite some caveats, virtually all the substantively engaged members of the international community have accepted the principles of (a) a CMC meeting at the end of September, and (b) holding the meeting with the Jowhar group. (NOTE: For their part, the Mogadishu-based members of the TFI stick to their mantra that they are in full compliance with the Charter, and await the SRSG's direction as to when and where they should convene for mediation with the Jowhar-based faction. END NOTE.)

10. (C) Given the security concerns that have surrounded any discussion of USG personnel traveling anywhere in Somalia, including the relatively peaceful break-away region of Somaliland, Post believes it unlikely that we will be prepared to directly participate in the Jowhar meeting. It remains for the USG to decide what it may wish to say about the convening of the CMC in the stronghold of one group of TFI members, to the likely exclusion of the rest.

11. (C) Should there be a sudden burst of successful dialogue facilitation on the part of the SRSG in the coming days, with the full cooperation of the members of the various TFI factions, one could imagine the USG warmly welcoming the CMC meeting as an indication that Somalia has returned to the right track. Were the PM to have sudden success in his own reconciliation efforts -- he has stated to the EU Heads of Mission that he intends to solve the differences within the TFIs through dialogue at the leadership, cabinet, and Parliament levels -- we could hardly withhold our diplomatic support for the CMC to meet in the context of such a dialogue.

12. (C) These successful scenarios seem relatively unlikely, given both the track record of the members of the divided institutions -- both the Somalis and the IC -- and the fact that key members of the TFIs will be traveling to New York over the next two weeks in separate delegations for meetings of the World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments and the UN General Assembly. Perhaps the reconciliation, so sorely needed, can occur on U.S. soil on the margins of these international gatherings through the facilitation of the SRSG. But should such a happy turn of events fail to materialize, we will be faced with the prospect of the international community, led by the SRSG, arriving in Jowhar to meet with members on one side of the TFI's divisions, and

by presence alone conferring upon these individuals the authority of the Government of Somalia. What effect such an event would have on the Mogadishu-based minister-warlords, is open to debate. A worst-case scenario, however, would have them deciding that, with their political marginalization now confirmed, there would be nothing to stop them from protecting their economic interests through military means. Or, President Yusuf could just as easily find himself politically emboldened enough to seek a military solution in Mogadishu (as he did previously in Puntland). Combat, especially should it involve significant numbers of Ethiopian forces in support of Yusuf, would provide a golden opportunity to Jihadist elements in Somalia to rally forces against both the foreign "invader" and the TFG -- which would be easily portrayed as venal, secular, and dysfunctional. END COMMENTS.

INVITATION LETTER

¶13. (SBU) The Prime Minsiter's formal request for the convening of a meeting of the CMC follows:

(BEGIN TEXT:)

The Transitional Federal Government of the Republic of Somalia
Office of the Prime Minister
Ref: OPM/151/05
Nairobi, 22nd August 2005

H.E. Ambassador Francois Lonseny Fall
SRSG of the UN Secretary General, Co-Chair of the CMC
UN Political Office for Somalia
Nairobi - Kenya

Your Excellency,

With the present, I would like to bring to your attention that it is quite sometime since the CMC monthly meetings were not held due TFG's engagement in its relocation activities and set up in the country. As you know, the Transitional Federal Institutions have relocated to Somalia in mid-June 2005 and engaged with very limited financial and human resources in the enormous challenges of bringing governance, peace, reconciliation and reconstruction to our beloved country after 14 years of ravages. Therefore, the delay of convening such meetings reflects these limits and does not affect the unfailing commitment on our part of bringing forward the cooperation with the International Community we subscribed to both in the Declaration of Principles and the Structured Coordination Modalities.

In the light of the above, I believe it is now appropriate and therefore suggest planning and fixing a date and agenda for the forthcoming CMC meeting to be held in Howhar probably the last week of September 2005 with the following tentative draft agenda:

-- Briefing and political update after TFI's relocation to Somalia
-- Modalities for better collaboration between the TFG and International Community in the framework of CMC
-- Discussion and endorsement of JPC's Secretariat
-- Review of JNA exercise
-- CMC Secretariat
-- AOB

Regards,
//SIGNED//
Ali Mohamed Gedi
Prime Minister
CMC Co-Chair

(END TEXT.)
BELLAMY